

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NICOSIA 0303

DEPT PASS AID

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CY

SUBJ: DISPLACED CYPRIOTS: PART II, POLITICAL ASPECTS

REF: (A) NICOSIA 0262 (DTG 271630Z JAN 76), (B) NICOSIA 0206 (NOTAL)
(DTG 211100Z JAN 76)

1. SUMMARY. PART I (REF A) PROVIDED STATISTICAL OVERVIEW
OF STATUS OF DISPLACED PERSONS ON ISLAND. PRESENT CABLE
DEALS WITH REFUGEE SITUATION AS SENSITIVE AND POTENTIALLY
TROUBLESOME ISSUE IN GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICS. PUBLIC
CHARADE THAT ALL REFUGEES MUST RETURN CONTINUES, BUT A
"CREEPING REALISM" HAS TAKEN ROOT AND GOC NOW BEING
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ASKED TO LEVEL WITH THE PEOPLE. WHILE LYSSARIDES HAS

REPORTEDLY MADE INROADS AMONG REFUGEE ELEMENTS, REFUGEE MOOD TO DATE HAS ON THE WHOLE BEEN PATIENT, CALM, AND SUPPORTIVE OF MAKARIOS. TURK CYPRIOTS CHARGE THAT GREEKS HAVE INFLATED REFUGEE FIGURES, KEPT REFUGEES IN TENT CAMPS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES, AND, BY INSISTING ON RETURN OF ALL REFUGEES, PROVED THEY PREFER "LONG STRUGGLE" TO SETTLEMENT. PROSPECTS FOR SUBSTANTIAL REFUGEE RETURN APPEAR TO BE DIMINISHING AS STALEMATE DRAGS ON AND DE FACTO SITUATION IS CONSOLIDATED. END SUMMARY.

2. RETURN OF THE GREEK CYPRIOT REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMES REMAINS A SENSITIVE AND POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME, DIVISIVE ISSUE IN GREEK CY POLITICS. TO DATE, CONTROVERSY OVER THE ISSUE HAS BEEN MUTED SINCE POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE EITHER FOUND IT USEFUL OR NECESSARY TO CONTINUE CHARADE OF TAKING ABOUT THE RETURN OF ALL REFUGEES. VITUPEROUS LEFT-WING AND PRO-MAKARIOS PRESS, OF COURSE HAS DONE ITS UTMOST TO MAKE POLITICIANS TOE THE LINE AND PREVENT FORAYS INTO REALISTIC PUBLIC ASSESSMENTS OF THE SITUATION.

(A) ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS HARBORS FEW ILLUSIONS THAT ALL REFUGEES WILL RETURN BUT SEES CONTINUED INSISTENCE ON TOTAL RETURN AS A POLITICALLY NECESSARY NEGOTIATING TACTIC. TO ABANDON THIS DEMAND BEFORE

ALL ASPECTS OF SETTLEMENT ARE WORKED OUT, HE CALCULATES, WOULD SIMPLY UNDERMINE GREEK NEGOTIATING HAND; UNNECESSARILY ALIENATE REFUGEES WITHOUT GAINING ANYTHING CONCRETE FROM THE TURKS IN RETURN; AND GRANT RADICAL LEFTISH LEADER LYSSARIDES--MAKARIOS' SOMETIMES USEFUL BUT WORRIESOME ALLY--A MONOPOLY ON THE REFUGEE CONSTITUENCY. GIVEN MAKARIOS' DEEP PESSIMISM THAT TURKS WILL MAKE ENOUGH CONCESSIONS TO MAKE SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE AND HIS REALIZATION THAT NO REFUGEES WILL RETURN PRIOR TO A SETTLEMENT, HE PROBABLY ALSO REASONS THAT IF NO REFUGEES WILL BE PERMITTED TO RETURN, HE MIGHT AS WELL CONTINUE TO MAKE HEROIC CALLS FOR THE RETURN OF ALL AND GO DOWN IN HELLENIC HISTORY AS THE MAN WHO DID NOT SACRIFICE PRINCIPLE OR SUCCUMB TO FORCE.

(B) LYSSARIDES IS PLAYING A LONG-TERM GAME. HE SEES THE REFUGEES ISSUE AS A MEANS OF BUILDING HIS OWN POLITICAL STRENGTH AND DISCREDITING GREEK CYPRIOT NEGOTIATOR CLERIDES, HIS ARCH-ENEMY AND THE PUTATIVE SUCCESSOR TO MAKARIOS. THROUGH INTENSE PROPAGANDIZING AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY AMONG THE DISPLACED POPULATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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LYSSARIDES HAS ALREADY MADE IMPORTANT GAINS, PARTICULARLY IN THE LARNACA DISTRICT, WHERE 75 PCT OF THE TENT CAMP REFUGEES ARE LOCATED. WHEN AND IF THE GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT MIGHT ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT IN WHICH ALL REFUGEES DO NOT RETURN, LYSSARIDES WILL HAVE A CLEAR FIELD, AND EXPLOITABLE ISSUE, AND THE ONLY ORGANIZATIONAL HOME FOR LEFT-WING LONG STRUGGLERS.

(C) AKEL, THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CYPRUS, FINDS IT CONVENIENT TO

FOLLOW MAKARIOS' LEAD ON THE REFUGEE QUESTION. THIS ENABLES IT TO RHETORICALLY FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, KEEP LYSSARIDES IN CHECK, AND TRIM ITS SAILS AS NECESSARY--EITHER TO A POST-SETTLEMENT, POST-MAKARIOS ERA OR TO A "LONG STRUGGLE".

(D) EVEN CLERIDES, THE MOST HONEST AND DECENT OF THE LOT, HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO RESIST PRESSURES OF THE REFUGEE CHARADE ALTOGETHER. THE CLOSEST HE HAS COME IN PUBLIC TO EDUCATING PEOPLE TO REALITY THAT NOT ALL REFUGEES WILL RETURN HAS BEEN ALLUSORY STATEMENTS THAT "WE MUST BE FRANK" AND THAT NOT ALL REFUGEES WILL RETURN TO AREAS UNDER GREEK CYPRIOT ADMINISTRATION. EVEN THESE ANODYNE STATEMENTS HAVE PROMPTED CHARGES OF "DEFEATISM" AND "SELL-OUT".

3. PUBLIC POLITICAL POSTIONS NOTWITHSTANDING, THERE NOW APPEARS TO BE A KIND OF "CREEPING REALISM" WITHIN GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITY AND PRESSURE ON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO LEVEL WITH PEOPLE REGARDING REAL ALTERNATIVES BEFORE THEM. PARTICULARLY FOLLOWING CLERIDES' RESIGNATION FLAP IN MID-JANUARY, RENEWED SPECULATION AS TO WHAT THE "COMMON LINE" REALLY IS, AND THE UNUSUALLY CANDID INTERVIEW OF GREEK FOREIGN UNDERSECRETARY STAVROPOULOS (IN WHICH HE INTIMATED ABOUT A BIZONAL SOLUTION AND LESS THAN TOTAL REFUGEE RETURN, REG B) THE PRO-CLERIDES AND RIGHT-WING PRESS HAS RECENTLY BEGUN TO CHALLENGE CRITICS OF "REALISM".

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4. THUS, ALITHIA RAPS CRITICS FOR BEING DISHONEST AND UNFAIR, POINTING OUT THAT WITHIN GOC THERE ARE NO DIFFERENCES, BUT A COMMON REALIZATION THAT A HEAVY PRICE MUST NOW BE PAID FOR PAST MISTAKES. MESIMVRINI TAKES MAKARIOS TO TASK FOR NOT TALKING HONESTLY WITH THE PEOPLE. ELEFTHEROTIS NOTES THAT WIDELY CRITICIZED HINTS OF CLERIDES AND STAVROPOULOS THAT ALL REFUGEES MIGHT NOT RETURN HAVE NOT BEEN DENIED BY EITHER GOG OR GOC, AND SAYS THE PEOPLE SHOULD NO LONGER BE FOOLED. MAHKI CALLS FOR END TO DEMAGOGUERY REGARDING THE "COMMON LINE". PRO-MAKARIOS ANEXARTITIOS, REFLECTING MAKARIOS' DESIRE TO SHIFT BURDEN OF ACKNOWLEDGING UNPALATABLE REALITIES TO OTHERS (I.E. CLERIDES AND KARAMANLIS), CALLS GOG TO STATE CLEARLY WHETHER IT IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT BIREGIONAL SOLUTION AND SAYS PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMED.

5. REFUGEES THEMSELVES HAVE NOT BEEN IMMUNE TO THIS "CREEPING REALISM" WHILE THEY REMAIN BITTER AND UNRECONCILED TO THE LOS OF THEIR HOMES, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT REFUGEES INCREASINGLY REALIZE THAT THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND THAT THEY MUST THEREFORE THINK IN TERMS OF ALTERNATIVE LONG-TERM LIVING ARRANGMENTS. SYMPTOMATIC OF THIS EVOLVING VIEW IS THAT REFUGEES THEMSELVES ARE NOW URGING GOC, WHICH WAITED WELL OVER A YEAR AFTER THE HOSTILITIES BEFORE TAKING MEANINGFUL ACTION TO GET REFUGEES OUT OF TENT CAMPS AND INTO SOME MORE PERMANENT FORM OF HOUSING, TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO "AMELIORATE THE SITUATION". IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, THIS CAN ONLY MEAN TO RESETTLE REFUGEES IN NEW HOUSING OR ABANDONED TURKISH HOUSING- WHICH A SHORT TIME AGO WOULD HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS AN UNACCEPTABLE AND OUTRIGHT ADMISSION THAT REFUGEES WOULD NOT RETURN.

6. POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE FROM RANKS OF REFUGEES--PARTICULARLY THE MORE EASILY ORGANIZED REFUGEES IN CAMPS--REMAINS. IN THIS REGARD, LYSSARIDES' REPORTED GAINS AMONG REFUGEE ELEMENTS, RECURRING RUMORS OF NEW CLANDESTINE ARMS PROCUREMENT BY LYSSARIDES' AND HIS BANDS OF LEFTIST THUGS, AND HIS DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO CAUSE TROUBLE OUT OF PROPORTION TO ACTUAL NUMBER OF HIS SUPPORTERS MAKE THIS A MATTER WHICH BEARS CLOSE WATCHING.

7. TO DATE, HOWEVER, REFUGEE MOOD HAS GENERALLY BEEN PATIENT, CALM, AND SUPPORTIVE OF MAKARIOS. CENTRAL FACTOR IN THIS HAS BEEN GOC'S PUBLIC INSISTENCE ON RETURN OF ALL REFUGEES. EQUALLY IMPORTANT IN ISSUE, HOWEVER, IS THAT REFUGEES ARE A DIVERSE LOT, LINKED BY THEIR DISPLACED STATUS BUT DIVIDED BY THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS, POLITICAL PREFERENCES, PRESENT MOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS, AND DIFFERING PROSPECTS FOR RETURN. FACT THAT GOC HAS FINALLY BITTEN BULLET AND TAKEN POLITICALLY DELICATE STEPS TO HOUSE REFUGEES MORE OR LESS PERMANENTLY SHOULD SIGNIFICANTLY SPEED UP PROCESS OF REFUGEES' INTEGRATION INTO SOUTH. THIS, IN TURN SHOULD HELP DEFUSE SITUATION FURTHER AND LIMIT EXTENT TO WHICH REFUGEES ARE RADICALIZED WHEN AND IF A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED PERMITTING ONLY SOME TO RETURN.

8. PROSPECTS FOR RETURN OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES--EITHER TO TURKISH-CONTROLLED AREA OR TO AREAS TO BE RELINQUISHED
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AS PART OF SETTLEMENT--APPEAR TO BE DIMINISHING AS DIPLOMATIC STALEMATE CONTINUES, DE FACTO SEPARATION IS CONSOLIDATED, AND TURKISH SECURITY REQUIREMENTS IN THE NORTH ARE DEFINED. WIDELY HELD ASSUMPTION HERE LAST YEAR THAT TURK CYPRIOT ADMINISTRATION COULD TOLERATE GREEK CYPRIOT MINORITY OF UP TO 33 PER CENT HAS CHANGED DRASTICALLY. TURKS HERE NOW MAKE LITTLE SECRET OF THEIR VIEW THAT PRESENCE OF 8000 GREEKS IN NORTH IS "UNNATURAL" AND THAT THEY WOULD PREFER TO SEE GREEKS DEPART. THUS, IT IS NOW MORE A QUESTION OF PRESERVING RATHER THAN AUGMENTING PRESENT GREEK POPULATION LEVEL IN NORTH.

9. BORDER AREAS SOUTH OF FAMAGUSTA ROAD (LOUROUJINA SALIENT, LISI, KONDEA, ATHIENOU), NEAR MORPHOU (PANO AND KATO ZHODIA) AND KOKKINA ENCLAVE WHICH ARE STILL POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, COULD ACCOMMODATE PERHAPS UP TO 15,000 REFUGEES. FAMAGUSTA (VAROSHA) COULD STILL ACCOMMODATE 25-30,000 BUT PROSPECTS OF ITS REVERTING TO GREEKS ARE PROBLEMATIC, GIVEN TURKISH SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AND DENKTASH'S ASSERTION THAT IT WOULD NOT BE RETURNED "UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES". NEVERTHELESS, POSSIBILITY REMAINS THAT TURKS MIGHT PERMIT 20-25,000 REFUGEES TO RETURN TO A TURKISH-CONTROLLED FAMAGUSTA WITH SPECIAL STATUS AND RESTRICTIONS OR TO A FAMAGUSTA "FREE ZONE" CONTROLLED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND CATERING TO FOREIGNERS, TOURISTS, AND TP NATIONAL BUSINESS. IN EITHER EVENT, IT WOULD APPEAR UNLIKELY THAT NUMBER OF REFUGEES RETURNING (45-50,000) WOULD MEET PRESENT GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A SETTLEMENT.
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